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Czech Republic

Biotechnology

National Biosafety Framework

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Report Highlights:

In March 2004, the Czech Republic officially finished its United Nations Environmental Program/Global Environmental Fund (UNEP/GEF) National Biosafety Framework project. The Czech Republic joined the project in July 2002. The goal of the project was to develop conditions for the safe handling of living and genetically modified organisms (LMO/GMO) and to meet the requirements of the Cartagena Protocol. The outcome of the project is a detailed report describing Czech biosafety policy; the regulatory regime; the system of handling LMO/GMO applications, monitoring and enforcement; and mechanisms for informing the public.

Includes PSD Changes: No
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National Biosafety Framework for the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic signed the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety on May 24, 2000, in Nairobi, Kenya, when it was open for signature for the first time. The Cartagena Protocol came into force on September 11, 2003, and since that time it applied to the Czech Republic. The UNEP/GEF (United Nations Environmental Program/ Global Environmental Fund) National Biosafety Framework Development Project started in June 2001. Its major goal is to create conditions for safe handling of living and genetically modified organisms (LMO/GMO), meeting requirements of the Cartagena Protocol, and enhancing sub-regional and regional cooperation. The whole program lasts 3 years with individual projects lasting 18 months. Around 120 countries are participating in the program. The total cost is estimated at \$38.4 million, GEF subsidizes two thirds of total cost, amounting to \$26.1 million, participating countries contribute \$12.3 million. There are six regional groups in the world (French Africa, Aglo Africa, Asia, developing countries on small islands, Latin America, Middle and Eastern Europe and Middle Asia).

The Czech Republic joined the UNEP/GEF project "Development of the National Biosafety Framework" in July 2002. The project was supposed to last 18 months, but due to administrative problems was extended till March 31, 2004. The National Coordinating Committee was established, consisting of representatives of biosafety related sectors and institutions, Czech Commission for the Use of GMO and products, non-governmental organizations and private sector. The National Executing Agency is the Ministry of Environment, Global Relations Department and the Environmental Risks Department; the National Project Coordinator is Prof. Kas of the Institute of Chemical Technology.

Great attention was paid to elaborate surveys in which experts from different spheres participated. Several workshops were organized for different groups – specialists, environmental inspectors and the public, in different country regions, including one sub-regional meeting of specialist in April 2003 in Prague, Czech Republic.

The projects has four major phases:

- Mission definition, work plan, institutional and managerial structures (Executing Agency, Project Coordinator, Coordination Committee)
- Information gathering on biotechnology and biosafety (legislation, applications, risks, methods of detection of GMO, quality of laboratories), creation of national databases (biotech companies and institutions, universities, high schools, web pages, experts)
- Identification of stakeholders (people and institutions related to GMO), evaluation of gathered information; organization of seminars, web pages, publications; identification of national priorities
- Preparation of the Report on National Biosafety Framework – in April 2004 will be available in English on this page: <http://gmo.vschi.cz>

Result of the project - **Report on National Biosafety Framework** has five parts:

1. Description of National Biosafety Policy – is based on precautionary principle

Forms several policies and strategies:

- State Environmental Policy
- Strategy of Sustainable Development of the Czech Republic
- State Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection Program
- Strategy of Food Safety

2. Regulatory Regime – the report lists all acts connected to GMO

- Act 78/2004 on GMO (decree 372/2000) – replaced 153/2000
- Act 110/1997 on Food and Tobacco Products (decree 24/2001 on labeling)
- Act 146/2002 on State Agricultural and Food Inspection

- Act 91/1996 on Feed (decree 451/2000)
 - Act 21/2003 on Marketing of Seed and Planting Material of Cultivated Plants
 - Act 147/1996 on Phytosanitary Measures
 - Act 242/2000 on Organic Farming
 - Act 166/1999 on Veterinary Care
 - Act 154/2000 on Breeding and Registration of Domestic Animals
 - Act 246/1992 on Protection of Animals against Maltreating
 - Act 79/1997 on Pharmaceuticals
 - Government Regulation 178/2000 on Conditions for Health Protection of Employees
 - Act 25/2000 on Protection of Health
 - Act 206/2000 on Protection of Biotechnological Discoveries
 - Act 17/1992 on Environment
 - Act 114/1992 on Protection of Nature and Landscape
 - Act 148/2003 on Conservation and Use of Genetic Resources of Plants and Microorganisms Important for Food and Agriculture
3. System for the Approval Process – a detailed procedure describes the approval process for all three regimes – contained use, release into the environment and placing on the market (information about the scheme is found in report EZ4009 on www.fas.usda.gov)
4. Monitoring and Enforcement – a scheme of responsible institutions is listed on the next page
Future plans: to create a network of accredited laboratories involved in the European network of GMO laboratories (ENGL system)
5. Mechanisms for Promotion, Information for the Public, and Education – web pages, workshops and courses, seminars, exhibitions, publications

Biosafety Clearing House (BCH): was established at the Ministry of Environment, Department of Environmental Risks; collects data and enables exchange of information, publication of reports, etc.

Related Reports

EZ4001	Status of Biotech Regulations – Central Europe
EZ3020	Consumer Perceptions of Biotechnology
EZ3015	Biotechnology from a Czech Perspective
EZ3012	Status of Biotech Regulations

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